

SELF-CONSCIOUSNESS

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all disposed to copy those who influence us through our feelings of admiration or respect.

The abnormal acuteness of the faculties when under hypnotic influence is also illustrated by common experience. Our energy and skill are at their highest when evoked by an impulse that is strong enough to make us forget ourselves; there are few who have not suffered from the paralyzing effect of a fit of self-consciousness.

The hypnotic condition can be brought about in various methods, and it is difficult to isolate the actual cause. But it appears that in all cases the attention of the person who is to be hypnotized must be attracted and concentrated, and it may be that he loses his consciousness of himself by strengthening his consciousness of externals—that the concentration of his ordinary perceptive awareness costs him the temporary atrophy of those tender shoots which we have figured as representing consciousness of self. So we all know that self-consciousness vanishes when we are engrossed in study, or in any pursuit which absorbs the whole of our attention.

If our faculties are appraised by their practical helpfulness in the struggle for life, self-consciousness appears to be an injurious superfluity. If acute it may interfere, not only with the exercise of acquired dexterities but with the performance of our instinctive bodily functions.

There is no more fruitful cause of "foozling" on the links than self-conscious thoughts of our style at the moment when our attention should be concentrated upon the ball. If self-consciousness is exceedingly acute the limbs may fail, the articulation of speech become difficult, and even the beating of the heart may be interrupted. These are the terrors of a bashful man. But if we consider the causes that have led to the ethical